

**CITY OF TAFT
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2013**

The August 7, 2013, regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Taft, held in the City of Taft Council Chamber, 209 E. Kern Street, Taft, CA 93268, was opened by Chairman Ron Orrin on at 6:05:12 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chairman Robert Thompson, and invocation was given by Chairman Ron Orrin.

PRESENT: Chairman Ron Orrin, Vice Chairman Robert Thompson;
Commissioners Renée Hill, Bob Leikam, Shawn Sutherland.
Interim Planning and Development Director, Mark Staples.
Recording Secretary Alina Megerdom.
City Attorney Tom Ebersole.

I. SEATING OF NEWLY APPOINTED PLANNING COMMISSIONERS 6:08:22 PM

Recommendation – Statement by Deputy City Clerk

Deputy City Clerk Alina Megerdom administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Shawn Sutherland.

II. CITIZEN REQUESTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS 6:08:33 PM

Michael Long introduced himself as the owner of Black Gold Coffee House on 508 Center Street and Chairman of the Greater Taft Area Economic Development Association. Mr. Long asked the Commissioners to consider creating a Downtown Zone Overlay for the City of Taft Downtown. It would include Center Street, perhaps from 1st to 10th Street. As a building owner he is very concerned with the condition of downtown, concerned with the way some merchants are renters and the way they leave their buildings when they close shop. He is investing in the City of Taft and would like to have a successful business. People, who own buildings, are absentee landlords and just don't care the way it looks. There is junk inside the empty buildings and it could be a fire hazard. He would like the Commissioners to consider the concept of Downtown Overlay so they can begin to do some things to increase their property values, protect their property values, and encourage investment by people who want to come into town. He is concerned with the Economic Development aspect of Downtown.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Consider approval of minutes for the July 17, 2013, Regular Planning Commission Meeting.

Recommendation: Approve as submitted.

Motion: Moved by Thompson, seconded by Hill, to approve the minutes of July 17, 2013.

AYES: Hill, Leikam, Thompson

OBSTAIN: Orrin, Sutherland

Yes: 3/2

IV. PUBLIC HEARING 6:13:36 PM

1. Zoning Ordinance Amendment 2013-15 – Consideration of a zoning ordinance amendment to allow Recreational Vehicle Parks in the General Commercial (GC) and Mixed Use (MU) Zones and development standards.

Recommendation: A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF TAFT MAKING FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT NO. 2013-15 TO ALLOW RECREATIONAL VEHICLE

PARKS WITHIN THE GENERAL COMMERCIAL (GC) AND MIXED USE (MU) ZONE DISTRICTS.

Staples presented the Staff Report on Zoning Ordinance Amendment 2013-15. He stated that on July 17th at the Planning Commission meeting, he presented a Draft Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance regarding Recreational Vehicle Parks. City of Taft is deficient in short term residential facilities such as hotels, motels and recreational vehicle parks. The Council has directed staff to address recreational vehicle parks because at the moment they are only allowed within our agricultural zone. Council wanted to look at other zones where it can be included and also to have it closer to the central part of town. At the meeting on July 17th, he presented the draft amendment to the Commissioners and the comments that were received have been addressed and are included in the final draft. Some of the comments were addressing utility hookups, including electrical, water and sewer. One change included extending the maximum residency beyond the 30 days that was originally purposed because some of the oil workers do reside in Taft for 3-6 months while on the job. The proposed 180 days will give some of them up to six months to reside in an RV Park. Another change was to provide flexibility with regards to walls and fencing along street frontages. It can be at the discretion of this Commission to either a solid wall, combination of landscape berm and open rail fence, or some combination of those items. That would be at the applicant's discretion to propose how they want to screen the actual RV Park section of their development. Staff would work with them and present the final proposal to the Planning Commission. The Commission would have the final say on the appropriateness of the screening.

Staples also stated that there is one minor correction on the Resolution, the title of the Resolution reads as Chapter 6 and 12 that are the chapters to be amended. It's actually Chapters 5 and 12. Chapter 5 is the Commercial Zone District section of the Zoning Ordinance and the Land use table was amended to include Recreation Vehicle Parks and a reference to section 6.12.190 which is the specific development standards for Recreation Vehicle Parks.

The project is exempt from CEQA; it will pose no significant effect on the environment.

Motion: Moved by Sutherland, seconded by Hill, to approve A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF TAFT MAKING FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDING APPROVAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT NO. 2013-15 TO ALLOW RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARKS WITHIN THE GENERAL COMMERCIAL (GC) AND MIXED USE (MU) ZONE DISTRICTS.

Orrin asked what will be the time frame for bringing it back to the Commission for the preliminary stage. Staples stated that with any proposal the General time line is that it will go to Council on August 20th. With any ordinance amendment, it requires a second reading, so that would be the 1st meeting in September. Thirty days from that date the Commission can approve any new proposals for RV Parks in those zones.

Orrin asked if the facility is subject to Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT). The City Manager would like to entertain the idea to see how it can be used in RV Parks to include TOT. Leikam stated that he thought that was part of the original presentation, it's almost like an overflow for some of the hotels. Staples stated that the TOT is not something within the Zoning Ordinance; it's something the City Manager through the Finance Department would have to amend on the Municipal Code to address the TOT.

Orrin opened the duly noticed Public Hearing to receive testimony from proponents and opponents.

Bob Jordan asked if they are entertaining a wall to put in the RV Park, will the Police have visibility to see it from another street. Staples stated that with every project that comes to the Planning Department, the department holds a Project Assistance Team meeting, where those issues are addressed with the Police, Fire Department, etc. Public safety with any project is priority; making sure it is accessible and visible. That's the balance any project needs to have with screening for security and screening for privacy.

Orin asked if there was anyone else wishing to speak for or in opposition of the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment. No one came forward, and Chairman Orrin closed the Public Hearing.

AYES: Hill, Leikam, Sutherland, Thompson, Orrin
APPROVED: 5/0

V. PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW – SITE REVIEW 6:24:22 PM

1. Site Plan Review 2013-17 – Consideration of approval for a proposed 6,000 square foot warehouse/office building, on a 2.80 acre lot, within the Industrial (I) Zone District located at 801 Black Gold Court (APN 22-240-15). Charlie Beard, Applicant.

Staples presented the Staff Report on Site Plan Review 2013-17. This building is another building in series of buildings along Black Gold Court. Properties out there were created through a Tentative Tract Map 12010, which was approved by the Planning Commission on September 13, 2011; it was subsequently recorded with County of Kern. The 6,000 sq. ft. industrial building was reviewed by the Project Assistant Team meeting on July 30, 2013. The project was found to meet all development standards of Industrial Zone District. Included in the Staff Report is a table that shows how the project complies with the Industrial Zone Standards. Staff recommends that the Commission approve Site Plan Review 2013-17. The applicant has a representative present in the audience to address any questions the Commissioners may have on the project.

Thompson stated that based on the required parking space, the site needs to have 9 spaces. When he reviewed the Plot Plan, he only counted 8. Staples agreed with Thompson and stated that on the Condition of Approval, #2 from Planning Department on page one asks for 9 spaces for parking. When they do issue the permit and they develop the building, they will ensure that there are 9 parking spaces at the site.

Orrin opened the duly noticed Public Hearing to receive testimony from proponents and opponents.

Juan Gonzales, representing Charlie Beard stepped forward to answer any questions the Commissioners may have. Gonzales stated that they have three more properties they are working on. They are looking at adding a few more buildings on that street in the next few years.

Orin asked if there was anyone else wishing to speak for or in opposition of the Site Plan Review 2013-17. No one came forward; Chairman Orrin closed the Public Hearing.

Motion: Moved by Thompson, seconded by Sutherland, to approve a proposed 6,000 square foot warehouse/office building, on a 2.80 acre lot, within the Industrial (I) Zone District located at 801 Black Gold Court (APN 22-240-15). Charlie Beard, Applicant.

AYES: Hill, Leikam, Sutherland, Thompson, Orrin
APPROVED: 5/0

VI. PLANNING DIRECTOR REPORT 6:32:53 PM

1. Kern COG Regional Advisory Planning Committee (RPAC)

Staples presented a report on Kern Council of Governments (Kern COG) Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC). He attended the RPAC meeting at Kern COG on July 31, 2013 and provided the Agenda from the meeting to the Commissioners. The staff at Kern COG conducts regional planning visioning, address environmental concerns, and develops regional housing needs.

They are a liaison for the City to reference whenever they update their General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Housing Element. They are the initial agency that covers a lot of the statistical analysis of the items. A lot of

it is in the realm of what is called advance or future planning. Kern COG has their Direction Towards 2050. A lot of the items they review and approve are that forward thinking, to the year 2050.

2. Kern LAFCO Municipal Service Review

Staples stated on the same day, July 31, 2013 he was able to meet with the executive director of Kern Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCO). There are 57 Counties in the State of California. There are 57 LAFCO Offices that are mandated by the state to encourage orderly formation of local agencies, preserve agricultural land resources and discourage urban sprawl.

Staples provided the Commission with a copy of Taft's Municipal Service Review. LAFCO has asked city staff to update it as it has not been updated since 2004. Staples stated that he will bring the updated documents to a future meeting.

VII. CITY ATTORNEY STATEMENTS 6:46:17 PM

There were none.

VIII. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS 6:46:23 PM

Commissioner Hill asked if they can add Downtown Overlay to the next month's agenda. Commissioner Orrin asked if there is someone Staples could point to for addressing the issues. Thompson stated for a point of interest in City of Taft's Zoning Laws, they do have what is called a Downtown Commercial (DC) Zone District. Everything that is in the DC Zone states what they can and can't do in that particular zone district.

Attorney Ebersole stated that the Commissioners can request an item to be put on a future agenda. Staples stated that just to summarize all the Commissioners comments, as Commissioner Thompson mentioned, the City does have a current Downtown Commercial Zone, it does have a lot of allowances for uses. It does include a mix of retail, office and residential. But to address Commissioner Hill's concerns, we don't have the specifics that were mentioned by Commissioners which are design, color, esthetics and maybe even a downtown committee becoming an enforceable group. He can bring all these items forward to the Commission report next time and start the official discussion.

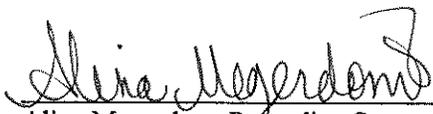
The Commissioners requested the staff to add Downtown Discussion as an agenda item for the next Planning Commission meeting.

Identification of Representative to the City Council.

Commissioner Thompson stated he would attend the Council Meeting and report on Planning Commission meeting updates on Tuesday, August 20, 2013.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Moved by Thompson seconded by Leikam and approved unanimously, to adjourn the meeting at 7:00:25 PM


Alina Megerdom, Recording Secretary


Ron Orrin, Chair